# Ford asks Congress to end benefits

# G.I. BILL UNDER ATTACK

see page 5


# WINTER SOLDIER

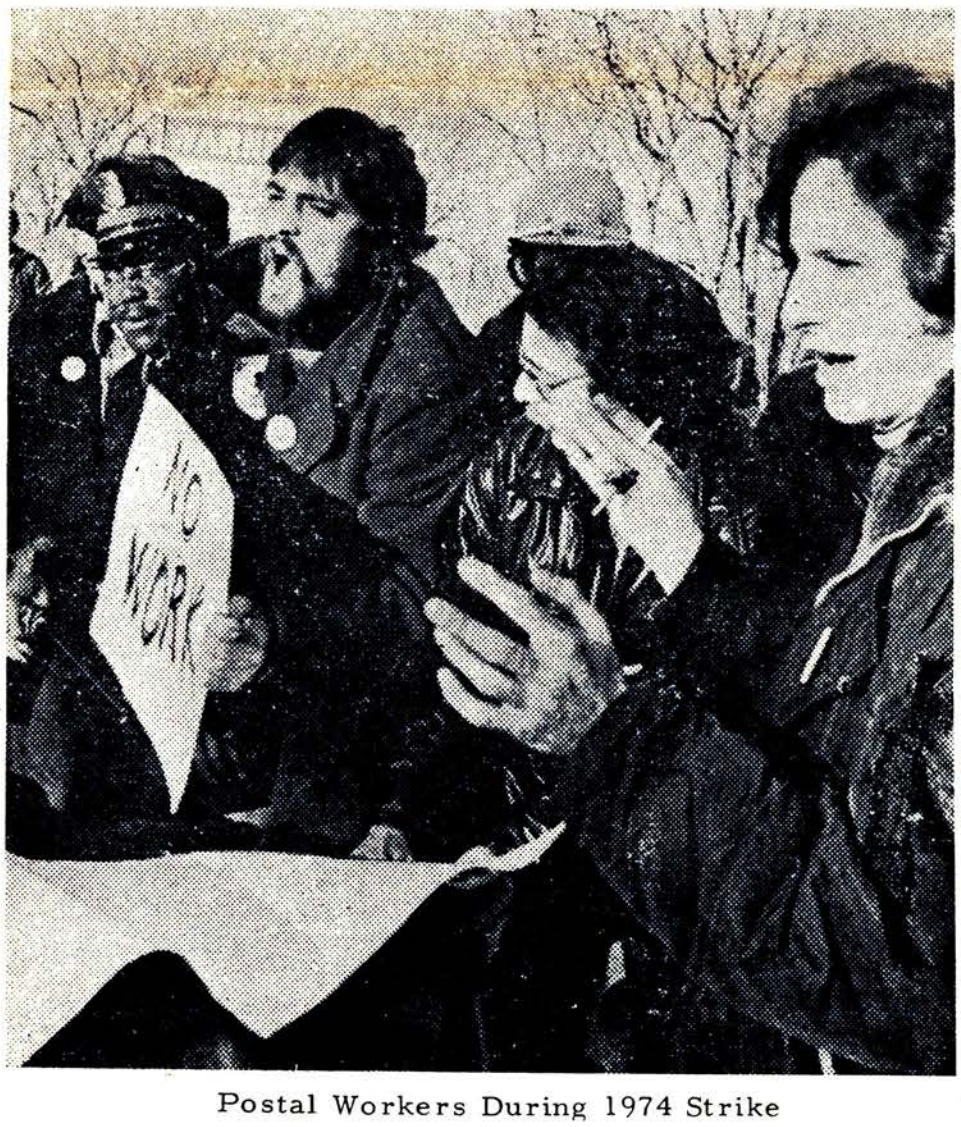
25c

A PUBLICATION OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR/WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION (VVAW/WSO)

Vol. 5 No. 5 JUNE - JULY 1975


## veterans play important role

# POSTAL WORKERS ORGANIZE TO FIGHT FOR A DECENT CONTRACT!




Postal Workers During 1974 Strike

A big struggle is brewing inside Post Offices all across the country as contract time approaches. The present contract between Postal workers and the United States Postal Service expires on July 20th and the fight for a good contract in 1975 is growing. It's going to be one hell of a fight because the Postal workers aren't going to let the economic crisis of the Postal Corporation end up on the workers' backs. The Postal Corporation is facing an $820 million deficit, which means they will be fighting against the workers with everything they've got. Also, the Postmaster General is using this deficit as an excuse for plans to lay off at least 50,000 workers over a period of five years, and some estimates for layoffs reach as high as 200,000 workers--or 1/3 of the total work force. Going along with the planned layoffs are efforts to redouble productivity campaigns, even though they are already the most intense in Post Office history.

But the rank and file Postal workers are fighting back against a rip-off contract; they have to do this because the upcoming contract could mean a decent standard of living or starvation wages, speed-up, unemployment and a continuation of the lousy benefits Postal workers now have. Veterans will play an important role in the upcoming struggle because there are many thousands of vets employed by the Post Office. The bosses will be trying to divide these vets from other Postal workers with their claims that when the layoffs come, vets will be the last to be affected. Vets must reject these divide and rule schemes!

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# GARY LAWTON IS FREE!

see page 16

# EDITORIAL

The VA has done it again! Now it's out of money. If you were waiting for a GI Bill education check on the 9th of June or after, forget it--there's no money in the account. According to the House Appropriations Committee, a supplemental appropriation of $425 million has been approved, but because it is tied up with a larger appropriations bill, and because there is one section of that bill where the House and Senate don't agree, the whole thing is entangled in a web of Washington bureaucracy and red tape.

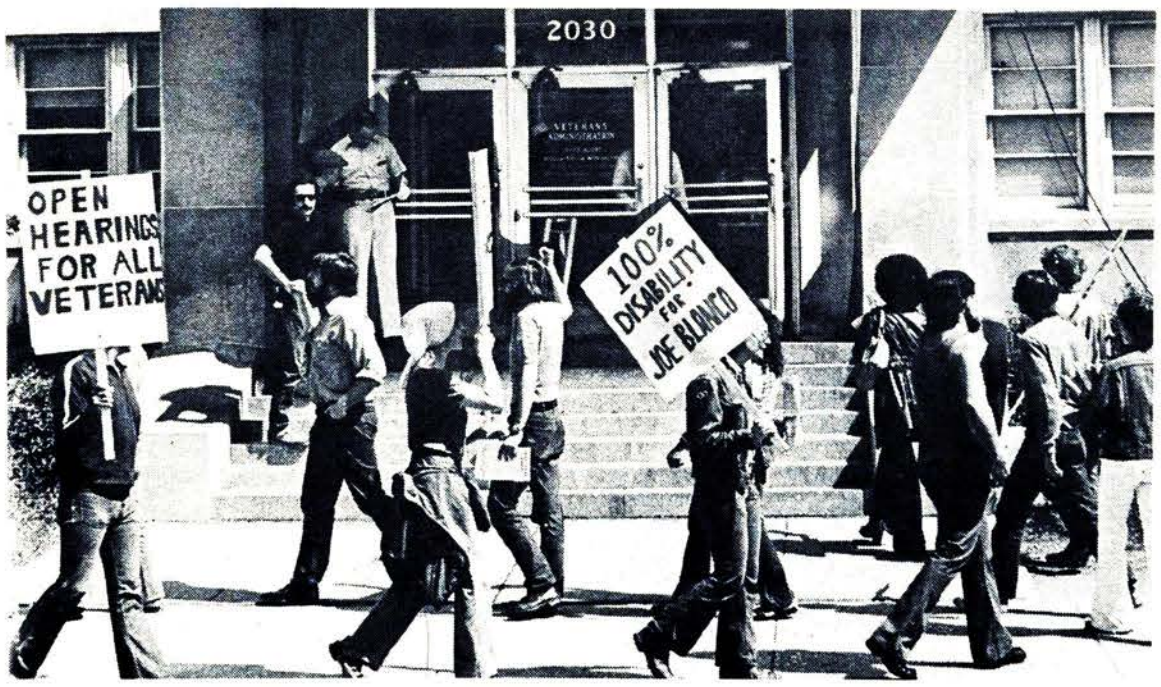
It's hardly the first time that vets have been screwed by governmental red tape--remember the lines we stood in in the Army, or the job assignment we were promised before being sent out as a grunt in Vietnam? More red tape. With a $15 billion (!!) budget, the VA can't manage to do what it's supposed to do. Of course the salaries of the VA bigwigs will keep coming in all right--it's vets who will get no funding and VA workers who face cutbacks and layoffs until the hassle is resolved. The VA has never shown much concern for the needs of vets in the past; there's no reason to expect that it will now or in the future.

For vets trying to get by on the GI Bill, it's hard enough to make ends meet. With a family it's almost impossible. But, with enough scrimping, the checks just last until the next check. When the checks suddenly stop so that Congress can play its silly games, what is the vet supposed to do then? VVAW/WSO's answer is clear. Unite to fight. Don't let the VA get away with another blunder; demand the checks. Expose the VA for what it is--a part of the system which works against the interests of working people in order to serve the rich.

Vets on the GI Bill may find a way to survive until the red tape is untangled. No untangling of red tape will help one vet: Erwin A Pawelski of Chicago. Pawelski, an unemployed vet, was taken to the Hines VA Hospital in Chicago on April 9th after suffering a blood clot, the result of a fall. On May 1, suffering from a stroke, and strapped in a wheelchair unable to move or speak, he was wheeled into an elevator to be taken for therapy treatment. For the next 27 hours he was "lost"--travelling up and down in the elevator with no one in the hospital able to answer his wife's frantic questions about his whereabouts. He died three weeks later after an operation. According to the VA, there was no connection between 27 hours in the elevator and his death. May be, but it sure as hell didn't help any. No VA investigations are going to help him.

VVAW/WSO's War on the VA intensifies. And these are just a couple of the reasons why. As long as the VA is part of the system of government which serves the rich instead of the people, it will never do what it is supposed to do: help meet the needs of vets. But we can force the VA at least to stop killing its patients, and to pay the benefits we were promised.

# FROM ARMY TRENCHES TO THE V.A. BENCHES




Picket line in support of Joe Blanco at VA

On June 5th in Chicago, the VA administration's usual routine was disrupted by 15 angry vets and supporters demanding an open hearing and 100% disability for Joe Blanco. Two weeks earlier, Joe and VVAW/WSO members had been promised some action on the demands by two supervisors. On this second trip we weren't interested in any more red-tape; we were there to collect!

Joe Blanco is an ex-paratrooper who had his back and both legs damaged while in the Army. He is now unable to work and can't even stand up for long periods of time. After 9 months of shoveling red-tape, the VA came up with a 10% disability rating and then it took several more months for Joe to get his check -- $32!

We went into the VA and surrounded the front desk demanding to talk to the supervisor, George Penn, who finally had to come out of his office and face the crowd. Not impressed by his arrogant attitude, we confronted him with his promise of action on Joe's case. While he was blustering, one of the VA workers pointed out J. J. Abadaka, Penn's supervisor, who was lurking around the corner. J. J., however, had no stomach for facing the angry vets. Penn's only response to our demands was to try and get Joe alone in his office where he felt more secure in telling his lies, but after he failed to split up the group, he retreated. One of his underlings promised to bring down Joe's records--which never happened.

While the bureaucrats were doing their red-tape shuffle, we took the opportunity to unite with the VA workers and the vets in the waiting room. Many vets came forward to say, "This is the same thing that happened to me and I want to fight about it too!"

We soon decided that the VA wasn't going to come up with anything, so after chanting "Foster and Penn get out of the way, No more red-tape, we want Joe's pay!" and other chants, we marched out of the VA to a picket line outside. Although Joe and the chapter didn't get any action, the demonstration was a success. Hundreds of vets have heard about the case and the whole campaign, and many are interested in working around the demands. Victories are won when vets get organized and militantly push the campaign forward; this is what's happening in the case of Joe Blanco. The VA is running scared--they see angry vets getting together.

Joe Blanco's case is typical of the way the VA strings vets along the red-tape trail. The bureaucrats there will try any tactic (including the vaudeville act put on by Penn and J. J.) to keep people from seeing the VA's true role -- to keep us from getting our benefits. But in Chicago, and everywhere else, veterans are organizing. Through actions like this, we are building a campaign -- a vets movement -- which intends to fight for those disabilities, fight for better medical care and fight against all the oppression the VA brings down on us. Dark clouds are already on the horizon for the VA, and the storm is coming!

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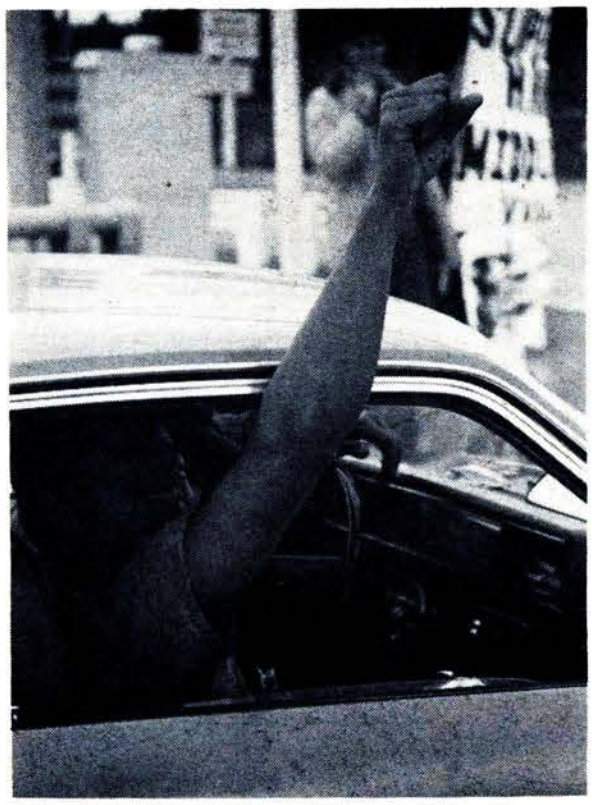
# MILITANT DEMOS UNITE G.Ls



GI expresses solidarity at Ft. Lewis, WA

May 17th, Armed Forces Day 1975 -- a "holiday" set up in the 1950's to glorify the role of the US military as a world aggressor--wasn't quite what the Brass was hoping for. At least not at a number of key military installations around the country where militant VVAW/WSO demonstrations were held to build GI struggles against the Brass and against the use of the military in another war. Called under the slogan WE WONT FIGHT ANOTHER IMPERIALIST WAR, these actions also keyed in on the danger of a war in the Middle East and celebrated the victories of the Indochinese people. Held at Ft Lewis, WA; San Diego, CA; Ft Meade MD; Syracuse, NY; and Homestead, FL the demonstrations also raised local demands around specific struggles GIs have been waging against military harassment and living conditions in those areas.

These Armed Forces Day demonstrations are important to all of us. They come at a time when President Ford has used massive military force in the Mayaguez incident, when warlike statements about attacking North Korea are coming out daily, and the possibility of a major war in the Middle East is ever present. Time and time again, Winter Soldier has talked about how a new war is the only way out of the current economic crisis--at least as far as the fat cats running this country are concerned. And just like in Vietnam and Cambodia, these turkeys are planning on making all of us pay the bill. But everyday, more and more working people are rising up and fighting back against the attacks being leveled at us by the rich: against speed-up, layoffs and inflation. We know who's to blame for our problems and we aren't going to take things lying down.

The same is true for those of us in the military. Most of us were forced into the military because there aren't jobs and we've got to eat. But we've learned the lessons of Indochina, as have millions of poor and working people in the US. We know that Vietnam wasn't in the interests of the American people any more than those of the Vietnamese. And we'll be damned if we'll be used as cannon fodder for new wars. As was proven in these Armed Forces Day demonstrations, the potential power and unity that exists in the GI movement is great. Particularly now, as the Brass is going to increasingly try to use GIs to put down the rising tide of labor struggles, we must build a fighting GI movement that will forge strong bonds of unity between GIs and workers and unite against a common enemy. And that's exactly what we saw happening this Armed Forces Day.

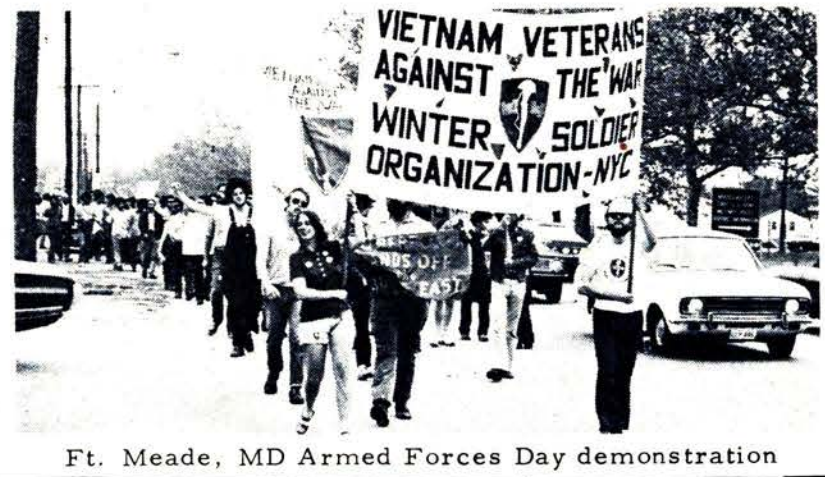
In some areas such as at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, VVAW/WSO members went on base with copies of VVAW/WSO's GI newspaper GI NEWS and rapped with GIs about the economic crisis and the danger of war. In others such as Syracuse, NY, the chapter tried to link up the massive unemployment the US is experiencing with how it's tied in to the possibility of a new war. There, some 30 people marched through the downtown area where a rally was held.

At Ft Lewis, WA, one of the major US Army installations in the US, a demonstration was held on May 16th. The Brass is definitely uptight about the work being done at Ft Lewis by the Tacoma VVAW/WSO chapter. The demonstration on May 16th was the second demonstration of this sort at Lewis in less than a month. On April 19th, over 60 people demonstrated in front of the main gate around the slogan WE WON'T FIGHT YOUR IMPERIALIST WARS! Seeing the struggle being built with GIs at Ft Lewis, the Brass has responded by trying to intimidate people. The state highway patrol was brought into the action in an attempt to stop VVAW/WSO members from leafletting GIs as they come out of the post's gates. More recently, the Brass busted 5 VVAW/WSO members, including 2 active-duty GIs, a few days before the May 16th action for allegedly plastering leaflets on traffic signs and telephone poles.

Despite this harassment, the demonstration was a great success. Setting up a rally outside the main gate just as thousands of GIs were getting off work and leaving the post, the demonstrators from Seattle and Tacoma VVAW/WSO chapters and from the Olympia Revolutionary Student Brigade chanted and held up large banners with the slogans for the action. While this demonstration wasn't a large one, the response it received from the GIs was terrific. For well over an hour all that could be seen was clenched fists as GIs passed the big banner outside the main gate saying WE WON'T FIGHT ANY IMPERIALIST WARS! As they went by all that could be heard were 20 round bursts from car horns and shouts of "Right On!"

The demonstration held May 17th in San Diego, one of the largest US Naval installations in the US, was similarly a real victory. Organized by the Southern California chapters of VVAW/WSO, some 80 people marched through the large "GI strip" in downtown San Diego to Balboa Park. Along the route of march the demonstrators chanted and leafletted the many GIs watching the march, urging them to join in. The overall response from GIs was really positive. A few joined in with the marchers. In the downtown business area an old woman who could easily have been 85 years old rushed up to the march and started shouting: "You guys are right, you guys are right! It is a rich man's war. I've been saying that for 20 years." Also a number of recently discharged GIs joined the march and later joined the San Diego chapter as a result of the action. These new vets joined VVAW/WSO because of the way they'd been screwed around by the Navy--both had received disciplinary discharges--and decided that they wanted to fight back.

At Balboa Park a rally was held with about 125 people including a good number of active duty GIs. Speakers there hit on the danger of a new war and how it was directly related to the over 10% unemployment in San Diego. They also celebrated the recent victories of the Indochinese people and the acquittal of VVAW/WSO member Gary Lawton on a murder frame-up, noting the importance of continuing the fight against police repression. A local working-class singing group, the Solidarity Band, sang about working people and their struggles against the oppression of the ruling class in this country.




Ft. Meade, MD Armed Forces Day demonstration

(continued from page 3)

At Ft Meade, MD, a number of East Coast VVAW/WSO chapters joined with Highway 13, the local VVAW/WSO GI organizing project at Ft Meade, for a very spirited action on May 17th. The Brass at Meade had really blown their cool in trying to figure out how to deal with the demonstration. Since Highway 13 has been working at the base for over 3 years, it is well known by the GIs there. The Brass knew this and knew that there is a hell of a lot of support among Meade GIs for the project and its politics--including lower-ranking EM in the very sizeable MP force stationed there. Acting as though they expected a frontal assault on the base headquarters, the Brass put all the MPs on alert, canceled a lot of leaves and restricted some units to their barracks for the day. When the VVAW/WSO demonstrators got to Meade they found large MP units stationed at all the post's gates, dozens of roving patrols on base and a large standby MP unit in full riot gear: all with the mission of "stopping VVAW/WSO."

Armed Forces Day Support Demo in Syracuse

Sending a part of the demonstrators to set up a picket line at a liquor store near the post's main gate (that sells scab Gallo wine to GIs), the rest of the demonstrators broke down into small teams and hit the base. These teams went to pre-arranged unit barracks on post, talking with GIs about why the demonstration was being held, about the danger of a new war and why GIs had to fight against being used as the cannon fodder to fight it, and about the struggles Meade GIs have with the bullshit conditions and harassment there. A number of these teams were caught and jacked around by the MP's anti-VVAW/WSO patrols but the majority didn't and managed to spend a lot of time rapping with people and distributing copies of Highway 13, the project newspaper. While the Brass had expected some people to try and get into the various unit areas they were totally surprised when a number of VVAW/WSO women went into the WAC barracks and spent a good part of the morning talking with the WACs. The WACs were quick to lay out what they thought of life in the "new action army" and it wasn't very much. In other unit areas, demonstrators went in and were enthusiastically greeted by the GIs there. Typical was the response of one GI who said, "Oh, we know all about the demo today, and are all for it."

Following this, everybody went back to the picket line outside the main gate where nearly 100 people held a militant rally. A large contingent of Iranian students joined the rally and spoke about the danger of a major war starting in the Middle East. Other speakers pointed out how the Ford Administration had offed 18 U. S. Marines in the Mayaguez incident just to prove it was still looking for a fight, and how other GIs would be similarly used if people let them. During the rally, the MPs had blocked the entrance to the post. But because of the work that had been done by VVAW/WSO the MPs weren't even sure they could trust their own men, and could only station senior NCOs and officers at the gate. While the Brass made it difficult for all but a few GIs to get off base to actually attend the demo, it couldn't stop GIs from feeling that they were just as much a part of the demonstration as the demonstrators out at the gate.

Armed Forces Day 1975 represented a major step forward for the GI movement. It is clear that there is still a long way to go in building a fighting GI movement that can build the struggle against the use of the military in suppression of working people at home and overseas. But, as was shown in the various demonstrations held around the country, a whole lot of GIs understand what's going down and are ready to begin organizing to do something about it.

BUILD THE FIGHTING GI MOVEMENT

# WHAT IS VVAW-WSO?

Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization (VVAW/WSO) is an international organization working to build a fighting movement of veterans and GIs to struggle against the exploitation and oppression of US imperialism, both a home and abroad. We are made up of vets and non-vets, GIs and civilians, men and women.

Veterans and GIs have absolutely no interest in maintaining the system of imperialism, and have nothing in common with the handful of rich who own and run it. The only law this system knows is the law of profit, and the ruling class will do anything to insure and increase their take. VVAW/WSO knows this only too well from the struggle to put an end to the war in Indochina, a war that was not fought for the Indochinese or American people. Millions of poor and working people were forced or conned into the military to fight for the profits and domination of the imperialists over the resources and wealth of Southeast Asia.

GIs rose up and rebelled against being used this way, and rebelled against the unbearable conditions (harassment, oppression of national minorities, oppression of women) that exist in the military. As ex-GIs, veterans have found joblessness, meatmarket VA hospitals, a miniscule GI Bill; and veterans are pissed about it. Everyday, vets and GIs are standing up to the Brass and VA bureaucrats, standing up to the courts and the cops; and fighting for a better life.

VVAW/WSO has declared "War on the VA" and is fighting hard to see that veterans get jobs, health care and education. We have also taken on the military, organizing ourselves and other GIs to fight back. But we are clear on one thing: that as long as the system of imperialism still exists, the VA can never serve the needs of vets; and as long as the military is the bludgeon of the ruling class, GIs will never be fighting in their own interests or in the interests of the American people.

VVAW/WSO is a weapon in the hands of veterans and GIs, a weapon to join with workers, students, women and oppressed people to defeat the system that lets a band of thieves steal the wealth of the world. We stand ready to fight VA cutbacks, fight for GI rights, to fight this system tooth and nail until it is ground into dust for all time. We have a common enemy: the ruling class and its system--imperialism; and the people are getting stronger every day while this rotten system grows weaker. THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!! JOIN US!! For more information contact the local VVAW/WSO chapter in your area, regional office or the National Office at 827 W. Newport St., Chicago, ILL 60657, Tel (312) 935-2129.

# UNITE TO FIGHT G.I. BILL CUTBACKS

VVAW/WSO demands Decent Benefits

In the continuing series of cutbacks and attacks upon the American people, the Ford administration has broadened its economic assault to include people soon to be active duty members of the Armed Forces.

If Ford's proposed legislation to Congress is approved, after June 30th, any GI entering the military will not be eligible for the benefits generally referred to as the GI Bill. The reason given the public for this cutback was that US military forces not engaged in combat are not historically given these benefits in time of "peace" -- this is a bold faced lie. On close examination, it is apparent that veterans of the military in the period between the Korean and Vietnam wars did in fact receive these benefits. The list of benefits denied as of June 30th is extensive. Some of the more important ones are: Education (including tuition for college, on-the-job training programs, vocational rehabilitation, tutorial assistance, and educational assistance for families of GIs killed in the military), non-service connected disability treatment at VA facilities, disability pensions from the military, death pensions to families of service people killed while on active-duty, and VA loans (including those for business and homes).

The elimination of the GI Bill isn't an isolated action on the part of the people who run this country, but instead is an integrated part of a systematic attack on working and poor people of the US.

To over 92,000 active-duty GIs last year, the GI Bill represented the ability to afford education while still in the military. With this education, many GIs had hoped to avoid the 15-16% unemployment that faces them as veterans when they leave the military. This percentage runs even higher--up to 30-40%--for Black and other minority veterans.

As jobs become fewer, more and more working class youth turn to the military as an alternative to hunger, regardless of whether the GI Bill benefits will be offered or not. These same GIs will then become the cannon fodder of the next inevitable war.

The history of the fight for the GI Bill and veterans benefits is a long one. On July 21, 1930, Congress established the Veterans Administration, which assumed the task of meeting veterans' needs --a process that quickly became one of establishing a monolithic bureaucratic apparatus and selectively passing out jobs and benefits to those vets deemed acceptable by the VA. The GI Bill was initiated following World War II and resulted from the demands and growing unrest among vets following that war. The benefits were not merely something handed out to appease vets, but the outcome of a long and bitter struggle for decent benefits that had its roots in the vicious street battles in Washington, DC in 1932 -- better known as the Bonus March. The Bonus March brought thousands of World War I vets into the streets demanding a right to a decent standard of living. As they grew more militant, the same military which had used and discarded them was called out to crush this movement. The Bonus March ended, but the struggle for decent benefits continued through WWII, Korea, and following the Vietnam war.

Now in 1975, the VA has become a sprawling monster of inefficienty and hostility to Vietnam-era vets. As the first line of defense for the government against thousands of angry vets, the VA now comprises the second largest federal agency in terms of employees, and the third largest in budget--with annual funding of 15 billion dollars.

The last few years have brought tremendous struggle by veterans against the VA, led in many places by VVAW/WSO, around the inability and outright refusal of the VA to deal with the problems of Vietnam-era and other vets. To counter this upsurge of vets demanding benefits promised them, the VA has allotted larger and larger chunks of its budget to security systems to combat the very people they supposedly serve. At the same time, the government has turned to the VA as one area that can be cutback financially, with the hope that by elimination of services to vets, along with other nationwide cutbacks, they can try to bail themselves out of the current economic crisis. Part and parcel of this cutback is the elimination of the GI Bill, which attacks GIs and veterans simultaneously.

With the elimination of the GI Bill, Gerald Ford recently stated that as a result of this cutback, the VA will be able to free up an additional 1.5 billion dollars. 1.5 billion dollars for what? Certainly not to expand the already shrinking social services, for example in the areas of education and health care. Perhaps the additional funds will raise the already sky-high salaries of VA administrators or double the number of guards at VA facilities. The rich punks pulling the strings of the country will certainly shed no tears for the thousands of GIs who will be denied the ability to raise their standard of living through the loss of the various educational programs once available on the GI Bill. After a couple of years in the military, these GIs will once again return to the job market, with even less chance of employment than before.

The elimination of the GI Bill and cutbacks in the VA are irrevokably linked with the struggle for decent benefits for veterans and GIs. Just as veterans were used to fight an unjust war of aggression in Indochina that wasn't in their interests and then slapped in the face by the VA, the government now expects GIs to sit idly by as they are subjected to deteriorating living and working conditions, racism, daily harassment and preparation for an impending war. For what! To be used once and thrown away like a roll of toilet paper? Hell, no! GIs haven't taken this shabby treatment and oppression in the past and they certainly won't have it handed to them in the future.

The struggle for decent benefits for future vets and all other veterans are inseparable. As the struggle around the GI Bill and other VA cutbacks sharpen, GIs and vets will be uniting to fight, not only for their own needs but for a decent standard of living for all working people.

THEY SAY CUTBACK;
VETS SAY FIGHT BACK!!

## Join VVAW/WSO

For more information or the address of the nearest chapter, call or write to us at:
827 W. Newport
Chicago, Illinois 60657
(312) 935-2129

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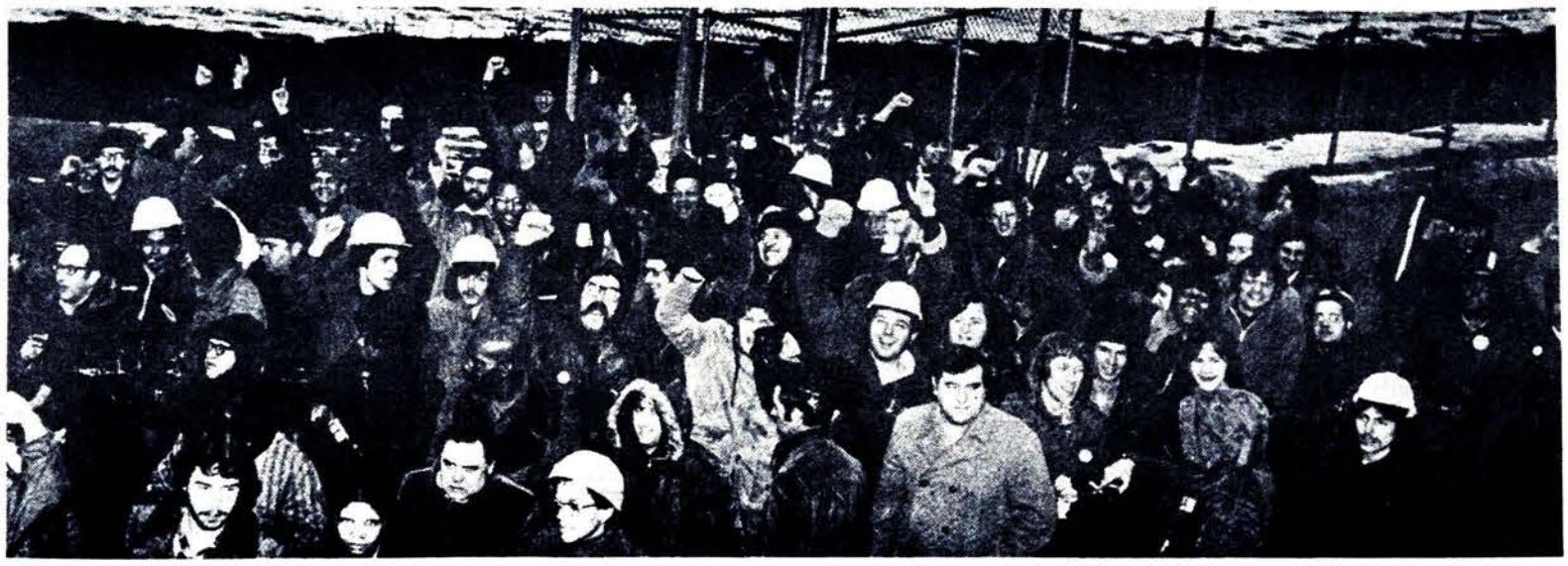

Workers Block Gate to New Jersey Bulk Mail Facility in "illegal" Strike

Though the leadership of the unions representing Postal workers is trying to put out a firm line of "No Contract, No Work," they are evading the real issue. A contract can be won with little or no trouble, but the key thing is that it be a good contract, containing the demands being raised by rank and file Postal workers and insuring decent working and living conditions.

Veterans and non-vets working in the Post Office must unite if they are to win a good contract. At the same time, the support of workers in all industries, as well as support from unemployed workers, will be crucial in the upcoming contract battle. It is "illegal" for Postal workers to strike, but if they can't get a decent contract any other way, there will be no other option but striking. If the strike happens, you can bet that the government and bosses will be doing everything possible to see that the strike is broken, even going to the extreme reached during the 1970 Postal strike where the National Guard was called out. All working people must unite behind the Postal workers demands and the fight for a good contract to insure that strike-breaking efforts aren't successful!

VVAW/WSO received the following letter from the National Postal Workers for a Good Contract Committee which lays out the demands of the Postal workers and why the contract struggle is so important.

Dear VVAW/WSO,

On July 20, our contract with the United States Postal Service expires. The four Postal Unions and the USPS are in the process of negotiating a new one.

This struggle between postal workers and our bosses is shaping up to be one of the key contract struggles for the whole working class this year. The outcome of this battle will affect not only 600,000 Postal workers, but will also affect the upcoming contract struggles in other industries. Recently, President Ford said that the Postal contract will be a "pacesetter" for other contracts this year. What he means is either the bosses will be able to further drive us, the working class, down or we will move on the offensive and begin to drive them back.

Right now, the whole system is in a crisis. The owning class is trying to make us, the working class, "tighten our belts" and bear the burden of their crisis. In the Post Office, which isn't much different than other industries, the bosses need to cut down on the number of workers and speed up those left in order to make greater profit. The key issues facing us in our contract struggle reflect this.

Over the past several years, the number of Postal workers has dropped from 700,000 to 600,000 and in this contract struggle, we are preparing to fight to DEFEND EVERY JOB. This means keeping the present No Layoff Clause, allowing No Reduction in the Work Force, and Improving the Grievance Procedure. Directly connected with this is the demand that there be No Productivity Clause written into the contract. The Postal bosses have already announced their intention to hold down any wage increase to around 5%. This will not meet our needs for the next two years and we are determined not to pay for the P. O.'s economic problems. We are demanding MORE MONEY which inclues a Big Pay Increase and Cost of Living Raises. We are also demanding BETTER BENEFITS which include a Full Paid Medical and Dental Plan, Less Years Till Retirement and a Shorter Work Week.

How do we plan on fighting for these? Well, recently the Outlaw, a rank and file Postal workers organization in the New York/New Jersey area and Uprising, another rank and file Postal workers organization in Oakland, California have initiated the National Postal Workers for a Good Contract Committee. We know that the power to win a good contract doesn't just lie in the hands of a few union negotiators shuffling proposals back and forth between themselves and the bosses. Management is ready to talk when we're ready to walk. The real power lies in the ability of the rank and file to shut down the Post Office nationwide. If we're united and organized, the bosses know we can fight and they fear this.

During recent negotiations, management came out with a proposed Lay-off Clause that would make veterans a special group who would be the last ones to get laid-off. There is a large percentage of vets working in the P. O. and the bosses are trying to use them to divide our ranks. No one is being fooled by this because back in 1973 the P. O. hired several thousand vets under a special V. R. A. (Veterans Readjustment Act) program whereby the vets got totally shafted with less pay, no grievance procedures, and no seniority rights. The rank and file, both vets and non-vets, took up this fight and won back pay for those vets. We won't fall for management's present divide and conquer tactics which try to get us fighting amongst ourselves for a few crumbs. We know that if we stand united and fight to DEFEND EVERY JOB, no one will get laid off.

In the event that we do go on strike in July, then management will use every means at their disposal from the top sell-out union leaders, to the courts, to the police and scabs in order to try and smash us. Like the 1970 Postal strike shows, when all these means fail, the bosses will use the military. Because most GIs are also from the working class we are all faced with similar attacks from our common enemy, the ruling class. We will strive to develop class unity with them and win their support so that they'll refuse to be used by the bosses as scabs and strike breakers.

We are calling on VVAW/WSO, the main organization leading the struggles of veterans against the imperialist system, to help us in our upcoming contract struggle. We are requesting that you publicize our struggle in your newspaper and where possible, have your chapters in different cities work through our national committee to help in leafletting and establishing good contract committees in Post Offices where we have no contacts. We are also requesting that you utilize your extensive ties with GIs in the military to publicize and build support for our up-coming battle with the bosses.

For more information, contact: National PO Workers for a Good Contract Committee, 129 W. 22nd St., 9th Floor, New York, New York 10011; phone number (212) 243-7819. Or, contact the above named committee at P. O. Box 5476, Oakland, California 94605.

*Fight For A Good Contract in '75*

# THERE IS NO DRUG ADDICTION IN CHINA

Older generation draws lessons from the past for Chinese youth.

Drug addiction is at plague proportions in the United States. Thousands of people die every year from over doses. The number of addicts on hard drugs is in the millions. For veterans in particular, the Indochina war made more addicts than deaths in combat or deaths by accident. Sources estimate the Vietnam veterans drug addiction total to be somewhere close to 200,000.

Hardly anyone likes to be an addict. At one time or another, almost all dopers and junkies seek help to get the monster off the back. But it's one thing to want to be cleaned up, and another to get the help to do it. There are hundreds of agencies in the US supposedly helping people with drug problems. From the VA to community self-help programs, millions of dollars are spent. But are those millions meant to help, or are the programs just placebos?

A quick look at how the VA handles drug problems is enough to convince any vet that they're in for real trouble. The VA has a solution, but its a solution of control--which is no solution at all. It's called methadone maintenance, or in plain language--another form of drug addiction. Methadone is more addictive than heroin and is harder to get off of than any of the opiates (heroin, morphine). The whole idea of the VA program is to control drug usage, not to help the addict clean up.

The VA is only the largest and most obvious of such programs. The entire federal drug program is geared towards methadone. Even when trying to solve the methadone problem, the government still seeks a newer, better chemical to replace it rather than seeking the total elimination of drug addiction.

But the United States isn't the only country that has had drug problems. In fact, there is one country that had almost five times the number of addicts here in this country. And today, that country is completely free of drug problems -- not one addict, not even one user of hard stuff.

That country is the Peoples Republic of China. In old China, there were 10 million opium, morphine and heroin addicts. By 1952, three years after its liberation in 1949, drug addiction was wiped out in China, with the exception of the Taiwan province.

After the founding of the Peoples' Republic in 1949, the government took up wiping out drug addiction as an important task. Anti-opium committees were set up in Peking and all provinces, municipalities and counties. Opium dens, which were everywhere in the country, were closed down by the peoples' government, and their attendants were given other jobs. The narcotics trafficking organization, made up of Kuomintang officials (Chiang Kai-shek's people), gangsters, get-rich-quick merchants and foreigners, who used aircraft and warships to move opium to all parts of China, was banned for good. Opium pipes and stocks of opium derivatives were burned at rallies of the masses of people.

The government issued an edict banning opium smoking, and passed regulations which put narcotics under strict control. Other laws placed opium derivatives under complete regulation for medical purposes. But these laws were not the most important part of their campaign. The most important factor was that the people were fully mobilized for a mass movement against drug addiction.

A mass education campaign that lasted two years was begun in 1950. It exposed the terrible facts of drug use and enlisted the cooperation of the people in ending the scourge which had been promoted by foreign powers and their Chinese henchmen for over 100 years to dull both hunger and protest. Full publicity was given to the campaign by the press; posters were put up and short plays staged at street corners for people in both the urban and rural areas.

The government was patient in its persuasion of addicts to help themselves and seek help. Free treatment centers were set up all over China. When an addict left one of these centers free from drugs, celebrations were held in their communities to congratulate them and they were given productive work. Even for dealers there was patience, as punishment was combined with education. In fact, only 30 offenders were executed in all of China for failing to change their ways.

Three years after the enemies of the Chinese people were driven from power and fled to Taiwan, not violence or repression, but "social changes plus the awakening of the masses" eradicated China's centuries-old problem of drug addiction. Today, no Chinese below the age of 25 has had any experience with drugs other than for medical purposes.

What is different about China that made it possible for them to end drug addiction? And why hasn't the same thing happened here? Simple. In China, it is the masses of people who control their own lives and their government. Here, government is controlled and run for a small handful of rich. And those in charge here NEED drugs to control the anger of the masses of people. The Chinese people have pointed out the answer. Drug addiction can be ended once and for all.

The Chinese people did not end their drug problem by sitting around and waiting for help. They had to fight for the changes that were needed. And that's what we have to do, too. We must demand that the VA end methadone maintenance and start drug-free programs. And we must rely on ourselves because it is the people of this country, veterans and non-vets, that have the power to change things -- not some red tape artist or poverty pimp. END METHADONE MAINTENANCE!!! DRUG-FREE PROGRAMS NOW!!!


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# THE UNEMPLOYED FIGHT EVICTIONS

Milwaukee workers, employed & unemployed, fight eviction.

Chants such as "Jobs or Income--Not Eviction" rang through a Milwaukee neighborhood on April 29th as members of the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC), neighbors and supporters (including VVAW/WSO members) united to fight the eviction of an unemployed worker. The story is a familiar one and as unemployment continues to rise, it will become more and more familiar in communities across the country. In Milwaukee, an unemployed worker received an eviction order from the Sheriff because he was unable to pay his rent. It wasn't a case of not wanting to work; there are just no jobs to be found. He had talked with the president of the company who owned the building he lived in and offered his services to paint, care for lawns or any other work on this company's properties which needed to be done until he could get a job and catch up on the rent. His offer was refused. The company didn't care if he had a place to live; all they wanted was his rent check at the first of every month.

People in the neighborhood were united by UWOC to fight this eviction through leafletting in the community and the understanding that the only way the eviction could be fought was if people struggled together. When the Sheriff and his movers arrived, people stood on the porch to stop the movers from getting the furniture loaded on the truck, and for their efforts, they were threatened with arrest. People fought to grab the furniture back while the Sheriff was frantically trying to get his truck loaded. Because of the united action of unemployed workers and neighbors, a victory was won in this eviction struggle. The Sheriff was finally forced to back down from the plans to confiscate the furniture to pay the back rent.

The fight against this eviction came a few weeks prior to the announcement by the economic soothsayers in Washington claiming that the indicators show that there is a light at the end of the tunnel--that the recession is "bottoming out." All of their prognostications have a familiar smell, and that's the smell of bullshit. The politicians and that small handful of parasites who own all the factories, mines and just about everything else want people to believe that the economy is improving. If enough people believe them, maybe people will start buying all the massive stocks of merchandise sitting on shelves and in warehouses around the country. But they forget something--no matter how much a person wants to go out and spend money to buy the things he needs, it can't be done if there's no money to start with.

At the same time these economic experts claim that indicators point toward an improvement in the economy, they also say that unemployment is going to continue to rise. So, big deal that there's going to be a "bottoming out" of the recession while workers are being thrown out of their homes, approaching starvation and finding it even harder to maintain a decent life. The official figure for unemployment today is 9.2% unemployed. Translated into real live people, that's 8.5 million people who want work and can't find it; that's 8.5 million people who could be--who want to be--providing a decent living for themselves and their families; and it's 8.5 million people who could be producing those products which the American people need so badly. At the same time, we have to understand that government figures lie a whole lot. For example, the economists speak in horrified tones about the 40% unemployment rate for Black teenagers. But under half of the potential workers in this group are even counted--the rest have not held jobs (and therefore aren't counted) or have given up even looking for work. The actual figure is much closer to 80%! And all the other figures which the government decides to put out are just as full of lies and distortions.

For Vietnam-era veterans, unemployment hits extra hard. Because of the time spent in the military, vets often lack the seniority of other workers who are the same age. So, when the layoffs come, vets are in real trouble. The government moans and groans about unemployment, pretending great concern; but to show this concern, Ford vetoes emergency employment, and programs around the country designed to employ vets all suffer from the general government cutbacks. Unemployment for Vietnam-era vets has consistently been around 15% by government figures, and the rate for Black vets has been consistently double that.

What's to be done? We don't want anymore of the government's predictions or empty promises. We can't eat predictions, and we can't wear promises or build a roof out of them. We need the unemployment checks, even though they cover only 60% of the unemployed and average $63 per week (which is $33 per week below the official government poverty level for a family of four). And we need these checks without having to wait for weeks while the government is keeping its books. More than that, we need jobs, and we need them now. The working people didn't cause the economic crisis in this country, and we're not the ones who are going to pay for it! Let the bosses do that!

The government's solution is to wait for the economy to pick up. In the meantime, they say we have to try to get along. One of their "solutions" is to set up their military recruiters in unemployment offices in the hopes of getting unemployed workers to enlist and fight in their next war of aggression. To help the jobless in Illinois, they have just announced that 15,000 workers in the unemployment offices will go on a 4-day week. In New York City, the solution is to lay off 67,000 city workers, so that the garbage will pile up on the streets and the fires will just burn themselves out. In factories around the country, the solution is to try to force fewer workers to work faster (and less safely) and forced overtime is becoming more common as the bosses try to increase their profits at the expense of millions of workers laid off.

Our solution is different. Workers make the machines run; in fact, they make the machines in the first place. The factory owners contribute nothing; they just scarf up the profits. Workers can unite and fight layoffs. Most workers know they can be drawing unemployment tomorrow and are beginning to understand that the struggle is the same for employed and unemployed. At the same time, unemployed workers are uniting to demand JOBS OR INCOME FOR ALL! Around the country, groups of people are going to the unemployment offices and demanding that the checks be paid--and they have been paid. And in places like Milwaukee, unemployed and employed workers are uniting to fight evictions of their fellow workers. With these kinds of actions, workers are saying that we've had enough. We're demanding JOBS OR INCOME, and we'll fight until we get them!

## Vet's May Day Speech

# LESSONS OF INDOCHINA WAR BROUGHT HOME

Vets contingent in NY May Day demo

May 1st is International Worker's Day, a working class holiday celebrated the world over. Here in the US, thousands of workers and other people, including veterans, united in militant marches, rallies and programs to celebrate May Day. VVAW/WSO chapters in cities across the country helped build for May Day demonstrations, including one of the largest and most successful actions, held in New York City and attended by 1200 people. Following is the text of the speech given by a VVAW/WSO member at the NYC demonstration -- a speech bringing out the lessons of the Indochina war and the fact that veterans and other working people are telling the small class of people who rule this country that we won't fight in another of their rich man's wars.

The Vietnam War is over. Everywhere you go you hear people asking the same questions. What the hell was it all about? Why did we get into the war in the first place? What's going to happen now? People all over are saying the same things, like what a waste of 65,000 American and millions of Vietnamese lives. WHY?

Ford, the Congress and the news media are all throwing out different answers and pointing the finger in every direction except where it belongs, at themselves, the ruling class. The fact is the revolutionary forces won the war.

To those of us who fought the war, this comes as no surprise. In 1965, after I got out of High School, like so many other working class kids, I found myself unable to make a living and fell victim to the recruiter's lies of join the Army and learn a trade. I wound up spending two years in Vietnam with the 1st Air Cav. Div. as a helicopter door gunner. When I got back to the states, right after the 1968 Tet offensive, I had a lot of questions too. So I, like many of my brother veterans, did a lot of thinking and investigation. I realized it wasn't a war between North and South Vietnam, but a war of National Liberation between the Vietnamese on the one side, and the US and a hand full of traitors on the other side. The National Liberation Front were able to recruit rank-and-file workers and peasants, got their food, money and shelter from the people. They could move large numbers of troops through villages and provinces without being detected by US forces because they came from the people and had the support of the people.

On the other hand, the US had to rely on the most barbaric tactics, napalm, free fire zones, concentration camps in order to wage the war. The ARVN, the Saigon army, was an army of draftees, with no interest in fighting to protect the interest of US monopoly capitalists; they were bound from the beginning to fall apart.

Now the news media freaks are rattling their cages about a blood bath, just like they did about the battle of Hue during the 1968 Tet offensive. Those of us who, like myself, fought in the battle of Hue know that the blood bath was caused by the US Air Force bombing the working class sections of the city, setting the city on fire. They scream about a blood bath, but the blood bath is over. The Vietnamese people have been victorious. They have liberated their country and kicked the ass of the US ruling class.

This victory is not only a victory for the Vietnamese but also for the American people as well. We've come to realize that the US system of monopoly capitalism is what caused the war. The ruling class, the handful of rich at the top, which causes wars like Korea and Vietnam is the same class of people which causes unemployment, cutbacks in social services, bad health care and all the problems working class people are faced with. The drive for greater profit, the first law of imperialism, forces the ruling class to expand their control both at home and abroad -- or die. This law of expand or die, governs all capitalist countries and is the real cause of war. Wherever they can make their greatest profits . . . that's where they send the working class to fight and die.

Long before the Vietnam war ended, the US was preparing for the next war. The military switched from jungle training to desert training, and Ford is trying to unite us behind him and the class he serves with his speeches about closing ranks. . . avoid recrimination and working together on the so-called great tasks that remain to be accomplished. Every worker here knows we are on the threshold of a depression, and just like the 1930's their answer to depression and crisis is WAR. This new war can take one of several forms: it can be a war like Vietnam -- a war against a Third World country, fighting for independence and freedom, but more likely it will be a war fought over the control of Europe. Both superpowers, the US and Russia are governed by the laws of capitalist development. They look to dominating Europe as the answer to their problems and the threat of a world war between these two imperialist countries is very real. Everyone knows the two superpowers are at each other's throats over who gets the oil from the Middle East. Whoever controls the Mid-East oil has a strategic advantage over the whole capitalist world, especially in case of war.

Here at home there has been a big push in recruitment into the armed forces. Last month, the Dept. of Defense released figures that the enlistment quota for all branches of the service had been filled 101%. Because of the economic crisis more and more people are forced into the military just to keep food on their tables. But the people who are going in the military go in with an understanding that the US ain't what it's cracked up to be. Vietnam, Watergate, inflation, the current world situation have given us a deeper understanding of where our interests lie. . . not with the ruling class. . . but with the working class of all countries. The Russian workers and the American workers face the same class enemies--our task is to fight against that class, not our fellow workers. They may get us to enlist, but they will have one hell of a hard time getting us to fight their imperialist wars. Already, the military is a hotbed of resistance with struggles being waged against all forms of oppression and for democratic rights, in military bases all around the world.

As the threat of war becomes more real and the danger of a new world war gets closer, fewer workers will pick the military as the answer to their problems. The slogan FIGHT, DON'T STARVE will become more of a living thing. The ruling class will be forced to return to the draft in order to get workers to fight their wars, they will be forced to resort to press-ganging workers, like they had to do in South Vietnam. Well, we've got a few surprises for them.

We learned our lessons well during the old anti-war period of the 60's. This time the draft board honchos won't be able to pick us off one at a time. When we veterans returned from Vietnam, we took up the struggle against the war and held many different types of actions. At one of the actions, Dewey Canyon III, we threw our medals back at the Capitol -- one of the veterans summed it up real well when he said, "If they want us to fight another rich man's war, we'll fight, but we'll do our fighting right here, taking the Capitol steps!" We won't fight a rich man's war, it's the working class we're fighting for!

# MEDICAL SERVICES CUT TO GI FAMILIES

The right to health care, an essential requirement for all people, has recently been attacked, particularly for the families of active-duty members of the military. Hard hit are the services for wives and children of lower-ranking enlisted people who cannot afford many of the services otherwise. Historically, the services have been less than adequate for GI families, especially for women and minority people, but even less-than-adequate medical services are better than no services at all.

The Department of Defense announced the so-called "additional guidelines" for Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) as part of a "concentrated effort to ensure better management of the medical benefits program." What this means to the people who require the medical services translates somewhat differently. In fact, what it says is, "We, the government and the rich that run this country are in sort of a bind right now (and it isn't getting any better) so we're going to eliminate these services to you." Of course it will help them manage the program better -- it will cut the number of people treated in half!

These cutbacks or total eliminations, effective as of last March, include a wide range of services including: visual and sight training, air ambulance service, dental care, pregnancy treatment, a wide range of therapeutical services and devices, psychological treatment, a wide range of surgical services, and various forms of counseling programs. Most important of all is a new cost-sharing system where people requiring many types of medical treatment pay half (or more) of the costs -- a drastic change from the free services most people are "guaranteed" upon entry into the military. Additionally, many people requiring attention will be referred to already swamped local, state and federal programs in their areas. These cutbacks are just the beginning of the Defense Department's plan for total elimination of health services to families of active-duty GIs. Additional cutbacks are planned to be announced in the near future by the Defense Dept.

The Pentagon, Ford Administration, and the blood-sucking rich leeches pulling the strings on the government have a real surprise in store if they think that GIs and their families are going to sit by as everything they have fought and worked for is stolen from them. The massive cutbacks in the Veterans Administration, the proposed elimination of the GI Bill and the massive cutbacks and attacks on all working people in this country haven't escaped the notice of GIs and their families. We're not going to take it! Decent health care is a right!

# cincinnati victory

# DRAFT RESISTER WINS FREEDOM

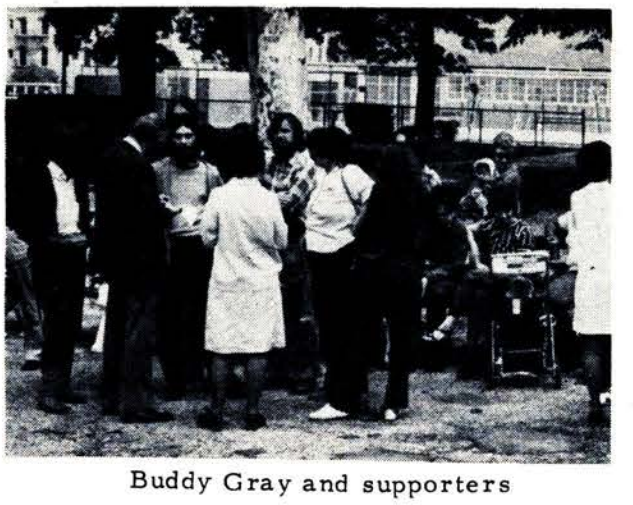
A great victory was won in Cincinnati when the US government was forced to drop all draft resistance charges against Buddy Gray, despite their long prosecution and months of FBI harassment. Buddy, who lives in the Over-the-Rhine community, a poor black and white Appalachian neighborhood, was being prosecuted because of his long-time opposition to the war in Indochina. Rather than fighting in Indochina he felt it was more important to work in his own community. He said, "If there's any 'freedom-fighting' for me to do -- it's right here, and not against oppressed peasant farmers 10,000 miles away."

Because of his community work, hundreds of people from Over-the-Rhine rallied around to support his case. In addition many organizations in Cincinnati, including VVAW/WSO worked to free Buddy and talk about the need for a universal and unconditional amnesty for all war resisters.

Buddy was arrested as part of a nationwide campaign against draft resisters that began in early 1973. The Justice Department ordered the FBI to give arrest priority to political activists. Because Buddy was actively involved in Over-the-Rhine struggles for decent housing he was a good target for them. But rather than arresting him right away, the FBI harassed him, his family and his friends for almost a year. Since his arrest in August of 1974, community support grew and grew in Over-the-Rhine.

For over a year, Gray and supporters working hard together planning to bring his case out to the people of Cincinnati. Rather than relying on the court system, where Buddy know he couldn't beat the government's attempts to put him away, they worked at making it a "People's Political Trial." The aim was to show that Buddy was a 'people's fighter' and secondly to show how the US military is an enemy of working class people. By bringing the case to the Over-the-Rhine community and the people of Cincinnati, hundreds of people said they would come to the trial to support Buddy.

With this public support, the government backed down and dropped all four charges of draft evasion against him. The government's action took place shortly after the Cambodians and Vietnamese liberated their countries. Buddy and his defense committee felt that these two events were related in that the American people clearly showed that they had enough of the Indochina war and the persecution at home.



Buddy Gray and supporters

Now that Buddy is free and can continue to work in his community in the interests of the working people there, he still sees the need to struggle for universal and unconditional amnesty. After his victory Buddy said, "This was clearly a people's victory - but a partial victory so far. For there are still nearly one million people facing persecution by the US government for their opposition to the Indochina war -- that includes thousands and thousands of other war resisters in the US or forced out of the US, or Vietnam veterans with bad discharges due to that war.

"The amnesty movement is growing across America. Together we can free all the other resisters and veterans, and put the real criminals on trial -- those rulers who...profited from these wars."

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# IRANIAN PEOPLE SAY: DOWN WITH THE SHAH

One thousand angry demonstrators in Washington, DC highlighted a number of actions in US cities from May 15 to 18, targeting the Shah of Iran, who was in the US to visit with Ford. Led by the Iranian Student Association (ISA), the large, militant demonstrations opposed the Shah's visit here, voiced support for the struggle of the Iranian people, and attacked the role of the US in the Middle East.

In 1941, the British imperialists overthrew the 20-year dictatorship of Reza Khan, father of the present Shah, and assumed power in Iran. Not wishing to be dominated by a foreign power, the Iranian people, after a bloody struggle, seized power from the British and expelled them in 1950.

In the period following the ouster of the British, the National Front, a progressive nationalist party supported by masses of the Iranian people, came to power in 1951. The first order of business for the new government was the nationalization of the oil industry in Iran, which dealt the British economy a severe blow. The Iranian democratic government was to have a short life.

The American and British imperialists, long-time rivals for control of Iran and the Arabian Gulf countries, realizing the danger that the independent government of Iran represented to their control, began to work out a plan to regain control of Iran. On August 19, 1953, the CIA with British cooperation overthrew the government of Iran and installed the Shah as dictator and front man for US oil industries. The coup cost the American State Department 19 million dollars, and the Iranian people thousands of lives in a struggle that continues to this day.

The importance of US control of Iran cannot be over-emphasized. Iran and the Arabian Gulf contain 70% of the world's known oil reserves. Western Europe depends on the Gulf area for 3/4 of its oil supplies, and Japan, another highly industrialized nation, depends on the gulf area for 95% of its oil consumed annually. This accounts for the massive US military aid that in the last year alone totaled more than any previous year's total military assistance to Indochina. The US is determined to maintain its grip on this area. Using the Iranian government as a vehicle of control, the US and England have sent over 50,000 Iranian troops into the nearby oil-rich country of Oman. An intense struggle of national liberation in Oman, led by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) has already liberated Dhofar, a major province of Oman, and threatened the US and British petroleum interests there. Hence, the Iranian invasion to make sure the "right people," as the US sees it, keep things under control, a task the Iranian Army, under the direction of the US military, has been unable to accomplish because of determined resistance of the people of the Arabian Gulf area.

A major contribution to the struggle of the Arabian Gulf has been the fight waged by the Iranian people. Since the early 1900's, the Iranian people, led by the working class of Iran, have waged a determined struggle for independence and liberation against foreign domination in Iran. Thousands of people have lost their lives in the fight that continues to this hour.

Today, with a population of 30 million people, Iran has a 60,000 member secret police force (SAVAK) and an estimated 40,000 political prisoners. Additionally, Iran has a 33,000 member rural police force under the direction of US "advisory" teams. The US military admits to having at least 3,200 military and civilian Pentagon employees in Iran. Two high-ranking officials, both top US Air Force advisors, were executed recently by the Iranian Peoples' Fighters Organization in retaliation for the killing of 9 student political prisoners by SAVAK on April 19th. The presence of the US military propping up the Shah's regime is a major source of struggle among the Iranian people.

Iranian Student Association demo in Rome

On May 15th, the day of the Shah's arrival in Washington DC, 1000 people, led by the ISA, demonstrated and picketed the White House. In California, 1500 people demonstrated against the Shah in Berkeley, after a march and car caravan of over 100 ISA members from Los Angeles to the San Francisco area.

On May 16th, 650 people demonstrated at Georgetown University in Washington, where school officials gave an "honorary degree" to the Shah's wife. Later the same day, 600 people demonstrated at the Iranian embassy where DC police attacked the demonstration, arresting 7 people. The demonstrators, nearly all Iranian students, fought back, and under heavy pressure the police released those arrested with no charges being brought against them.

The four-day demonstrations in Washington ended with a demonstration of 900 people, including a VVAW/WSO contingent, at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on the evening of May 18th. The Shah was at the Center to attend a cultural performance as a brief respite from his visit to discuss the purchase of more military hardware, eight nuclear reactors, and several multi-million dollar technical assistance contracts. Because of the large, militant demonstration, the Shah was forced to enter the building by a helicopter landing on the roof of the Center.

Several other large demonstrations occurred around the country during the Shah's visit to the US, including Houston, Texas where 450 people staged a 48-hour vigil at the Iranian Consulate; there were also actions in Lansing, Michigan and Chicago. On May 12th, demonstrators in Portland, Oregon, confronted another visiting official from Iran.

Internationally, earlier in May, Iranian students held large demonstrations in Hamburg, Rome, Vienna, and Paris, to protest the murders of 9 students and the continued US presence in Iran.

The demonstrations in the US, particularly in Washington, were a tremendous success. Large, militant demonstrations co-ordinated perfectly with a high degree of discipline enabled the Iranian students and their supporters to effectively reach thousands of people. Across the US, demonstrators distributed hundreds of thousands of leaflets about the Shah and the struggle in Iran, in the face of continual police attacks and intimidation, coupled with a national media blackout of the demonstrations.

The determined fighting spirit and courage of the Iranian people, as exemplified by these demonstrations, will most certainly be the major force that will drive US imperialism and its puppets such as the Shah out of the Arabian Gulf--a struggle to be shared by all freedom-loving people of the world.

DOWN WITH THE SHAH!!
SUPERPOWERS--HANDS OFF THE MIDDLE EAST!!

# FORD'S MAYAGUEZ SET-UP BACKFIRES

Even as the Cambodian people were binding up the wounds of 5 years of war and consolidating the recent liberation of their country, the US was sending troops ships and bombers back to attack Cambodia and create the so-called "Mayaguez incident." Since the liberation of Cambodia, the US government has continued to carry out a steady series of sabotage and espionage activities against the new Cambodia government, the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNC). A number of boats have been captured with Thai and Cambodian mercenaries carrying large amounts of explosives, US weapons and modern communications gear. On being questioned, they all admitted being CIA agents sent to disrupt the new government and send intelligence back to the US. On May 7th, another such incident occurred when a ship of supposedly Panamanian registry was detained for a few days for carrying out reconnaissance activities just a few kilometers off the coast of Cambodia.

Then on May 12th, the US container vessel Mayaguez intruded into Cambodian waters to carry out provocations against the new government. In a totally justifiable move aimed at safeguarding the sovereignty and security of their country, the Cambodians seized the Mayaguez and its crew of 39. The events that followed this are all too well known. The next day (May 13), the US sent fighter planes to bomb Cambodian ships and port facilities. When the bombing continued on the 14th, GRUNC decided to release the ship and crew because "of good will and desire for a calm and peaceful life... despite the fact that the vessel had encroached upon and blatantly carried out spying and provocative activities..." Though the ship and crew were released at dawn on the 15th, the US went on to launch a massive land, sea and air attack on Cambodia--a full 3 1/2 hours after the crew and ship were released.

During the attack that went on throughout the rest of the day, the US landed a force of 210 Marines on Cambodia's Tang Island--at one point dropping a 15,000 pound bomb on the GRUNC troops defending it--and bombed and strafed the port city of Sihanoukville, the naval base at the town of Ream, a nearby airfield and an oil refinery. All of these attacks caused the Cambodian people a terrible loss of human life. In addition, serious damage was done to key installations in the war-weakened Cambodian economy.

On the US side, the venture cost the lives of some 18 US Marines, with another 50-70 wounded, depending on whose casualty figures you care to use. (Another 23 were killed in Thailand on May 13th when an Air Force helicopter crashed enroute to U Tapao Airforce Base--the staging area for the attack on Tang Island--for possible use in the operation.) Anyway you cut it, the Tang Island landing was an utter disaster for the US. The US landed troops on the wrong island to rescue the ship's crew that had been released 3 1/2 hours earlier and suffered close to 50% casualties in the process. President Ford had the nerve to call it a "great victory." It's doubtful the hundred or so US casualties will see the Mayaguez incident as a "great victory."

Liberation Fighters Vigilantly Standing Guard

A logical question is why the hell did the US do all this? If the Ford administration knew ships had been detained in the same area, why didn't it warn the Mayaguez--if it was the "innocent merchant" ship portrayed by US propaganda? Why did the US military viciously attack Cambodia AFTER the Mayaguez and its crew had been released? The answer is simple. It did all this because it had to. First, the US government is still unreconciled to the victories of the Indochinese people and is madly scrambling about trying to cover up its defeat and sabotage the new revolutionary governments. Secondly, the US has got a "rep" to maintain as the meanest gangster in world politics. It needs to prove to its enemies that it is still dangerous, and prove to its lackey friends that it won't sell them out in a pinch. Finally, faced with an uncontrollable economic crisis at home, the Ford Administration is hoping to "escape" from the crisis by starting another war. To do this, the government must first attempt to dupe the American people into support for wars of aggression.

The Mayaguez incident was tailor-made to fulfill all these needs. It was a set-up deal from the start. A New York Times article printed before the news of the fighting in Cambodia had reached the US noted "high-ranking sources familiar with military strategy and planning" said that "the seizure of the vessel might provide the test of American determination that the US Government has been seeking since the collapse of Allied governments in South Vietnam and Cambodia." Going a step further, Secretary of State Kissinger laid the cards right out on the table. In a newsbriefing, he said that the lives of the Mayaguez crew "must unfortunately be a secondary consideration" and revealed that the real reason the raids had been set up was to show that "there are limits beyond which the US cannot be pushed." For the US to create the entire Mayaguez incident and then turn around and call the Cambodian seizure of the ship "an act of piracy" is to literally turn the truth on its head. It is the old game of a thief calling "stop thief" to hide his own crimes.

But, for all its plotting and scheming, the US created Mayaguez incident blew up in the Ford administration's face. The harder it tries to appear strong, the weaker it proves to the world it really is. The "tough" guy the US tries to portray itself to be, exposes itself to the whole world as a bully that picks on small, weak countries. But as Cambodia Laos, and Vietnam have shown, those small, weak countries can whip hell out of aggressors hundreds of times stronger than they are. The US actions around the Mayaguez were condemned by governments all around the world. Even the faithful servant of the US, the government of Thailand, was forced to condemn the act. Trying to save its own neck, Thailand had to accomodate the new revolutionary governments in Indochina and placate its own peoples' hatred of US imperialism. As one result of Ford's "great victory" Thailand nearly broke diplomatic relations with the US for launching the attack on Cambodia from Thai soil and ordered the US to rapidly speed up the evacuation of the remaining US forces in Thailand.

Just like a dinosaur stuck in a tar pit, the more the US thrashes about causing trouble and trying to get out of the crisis it is in, the deeper it sinks into the pit. It may try starting trouble like it did with the Mayaguez incident as a way of solving its problems, but in the long run, all it's doing is sinking deeper into a pit it's never going to get out of.

# VIETNAM: Building A New Society

Marketplace in Hue after liberation

The Vietnamese revolutionary fighters have won their war for freedom and independence. Since overthrowing the US imperialists and their puppet regime in Saigon on April 31, the workers and peasants, guided by the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) are consolidating their victory and wiping out the last remnants of over a century of exploitation by France, Japan and the US.

On the first day of liberation, the people of Saigon came out in celebration enjoying three different marches on International Worker's Day. One week later a victory rally was held attended by over 30,000 people waving PRG flags and carrying portraits of Ho Chi Minh. Life was getting back to normal after the first tumultuous week, with people shopping and carrying on daily jobs. People who had fled Saigon were returning by the busload. Others who were in Saigon for several years, were able, for the first time, to return to their hamlets and farms without fear of being brutalized by war.

For the last thirty years Vietnam was controlled by the French and then by the American corporations and their stooges, Thieu, Ky and others. This system was based on making money for a few parasites who were living off the labor and sweat of the Vietnamese people. In the face of war, corruption, death, starvation and destruction the Vietnamese people fought unceasingly to overthrow this bankrupt system. Now South Vietnam is under a new system that is taking up the task of wiping out this exploitation and hard times. Under the old regime over 1,000,000 were unemployed and the Vietnamese see this as one of the main problems to overcome. Shortly after the liberation 3,000 workers stormed into the headquarters of the South Vietnam labor movement and formed a new revolutionary trade union organization. The leadership of the old trade unions were supporters of the Thieu regime. Now under the new government, the workers have control of the factories and have voluntarily been working longer hours to aid the reconstruction of the country. Under these new councils the government will find jobs for the people who have been unemployed for a long time.

Many of the people who came into Saigon during the last few years were from the countryside. The PRG has made it known that all people who left their villages will be welcomed back with open arms. In one case a member of a family went back to his ancestral home and was greeted by a National Liberation Front soldier who said, "Hey stranger, you're welcome to come back and farm the land again." Very impressed, the man went back to Saigon and took his family back to the village. With families returning to the farmlands, the unemployment in Saigon will be alleviated and food shortages will be wiped out. One of the first things that the PRG did after liberation was to open the storage areas that contained rice supplies so that people who were starving would be able to feed themselves.

Under the Thieu regime over 200,000 Vietnamese were put in jails for opposing his tyrannical rule. With the liberation of Vietnam, the PRG is releasing these political prisoners. Families of prisoners are being urged to join in the plans to welcome them home.

As part of changing the society, there is the awesome task of wiping out the decadent things introduced by the American occupation, including "porn" magazines. In mid-May several hundred students marched through the streets of Saigon gaining support for getting rid of these alien things from the culture. Under the bankrupt economy of Thieu, prostitution flourished with over 500,000 prostitutes in the country. Under the leadership of the PRG these women are being re-educated by giving them productive jobs, while at the same time giving them an education and teaching them politics, so that instead of having to resort to prostitution they can become full members of society. The problems with drug addicts will be treated along the same lines.

While the Vietnamese move on in reconstructing their country the US ruling class and the press are trying to paint the liberation as a defeat for the American people. Clouding over the real victory for the working people of America they attempted to draw sympathy to the thousands of orphans that were, in fact, kidnapped by the American government and brought to this country. In addition, the many refugees that are now waiting to become residents include major war criminals and those who committed crimes against the Vietnamese people. Nguyen Kao Ky, former Vice President of South Vietnam, and the former police chief of Saigon, among others, have escaped their just punishments by fleeing Vietnam. The PRG is holding people's trials for similar people who remained behind, and who deserve the stern justice they are getting.

But no matter how they try and hide the truth from the American people, it is clear that the Vietnamese have won a major victory in liberating their country and overthrowing the system of exploitation that leeched off the workers and peasants. This same system of exploitation and oppression exists here in the US too, and it is the same handful of parasites that oppress the American people that oppressed the Vietnamese people. When US working people go out on strike, demands decent living conditions and fights unemployment and police repression, we are fighting the same class of people that the Indochinese people beat.

THE VICTORY OF THE INDOCHINESE IS A VICTORY FOR ALL OF US !!

# CELEBRATION OF VICTORY

**Vietnamese and Sampson at celebration**

On Sunday, May 18th, a celebration was held in Montreal, Quebec marking the birthday of Ho Chi Minh and the victory of the liberation of Vietnam. John Sampson, a member of the New York City VVAW/WSO chapter attended the celebration as the representative of the organization.

The international festivity was marked by great spirit and joy as the Vietnamese delegates from the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam talked about the successes being made in the process of national reconciliation. The Vietnamese thanked the American people who aided them in their long struggle for freedom and independence. The celebration ended with great applause and a firm commitment to deepen unity between the Vietnamese and American people.

# VETS IN PRISON

You need a job, or you've been busted and the judge offers you a deal. So, you join the Army. Three years later, you're out--you still need a job only now you have a wife and a kid, or a drug habit to support. You've got no training, no prospects. There's a liquor store on the corner, and the family needs food. You knock it over--it works, so you try again. But there's a slip-up and, since a fast-talking lawyer is too expensive and it costs too much to buy the judge, you're sentenced to prison.

There are thousands of variations on this story. And, according to the 1970 census, there were almost 100,000 vets in state and federal prisons, and countless thousands more in the shabby county and city lock-ups which no government agency even bothers to keep track of. We know who makes up the majority of prisoners: people who are poor, minority people, people who have been targets of police repression. White-collar crime (for instance, the manufacturer whose faulty equipment kills people, or the coal mine owner whose shoddy profit-making mine collapses on a group of miners) is seldom punished.

Veterans, and particularly Vietnam-era vets, face special problems which can lead to prison. After having seen what the US government was doing in Southeast Asia, thousands of vets are much less likely to pay attention to the so-called "laws and orders" of the same government at home. And since the government and the people who control it, base much of their power on keeping private property "sacred," they will send off to prison anyone who threatens this in whatever way.

From a Kentucky prison comes a history which could be repeated in almost any prison in the country: "I went into the Marine Corps at the age of 17 and I was gung-ho and then we moved out to a hell-hole called Thailand and when my 16 months was over in the 3rd Marine Div., I came back to the states on drugs...." This was followed by a couple of fights, a trip to the Navy psychiatrist, a general discharge under honorable conditions, and a return home. "So I came home, well I was sick and hurting and I had a cold turkey. My father seen me and when he seen my discharge he got me in his car and drove me to the VA hospital in Memphis, Tenn. I was sick, every 5 miles we stopped, so I went in the hospital alone and in a big pretty clean office this well educated officer told me that they couldn't help me for drug addiction. I couldn't believe it. I just got up and walked out and my father went in and came out and said he now didn't know what to do. I thought to myself I got on drugs overseas and I had habits over there yet if I would have got killed, I would have died a Marine fighting for his country... So I didn't die and I was a lucky one... and sometimes I wonder if I would have been better off to have had my first shot over there from a gun instead of an outfit full of opium. So when we came back from the VA hospital I went running dope and then still it came too few, so I ran into a drug store and finally was sent to prison...."

Prisons preach rehabilitation; they don't do it. In-prison programs which actually help prepare prisoners to find a job on the outside are scarce, and companies which will hire an ex-prisoner are equally hard to find. Prison slave labor is paid anywhere from nothing to a magnificent 75¢ a day, so very few people come out of prison with a nest egg to live on. Even under the best circumstances, prisons are a large chunk out of a person's life; time totally wasted. But also time where education, job training, other useful skills could be picked up. And the Veterans Administration (VA) is supposed to be helping vets with exactly these things.

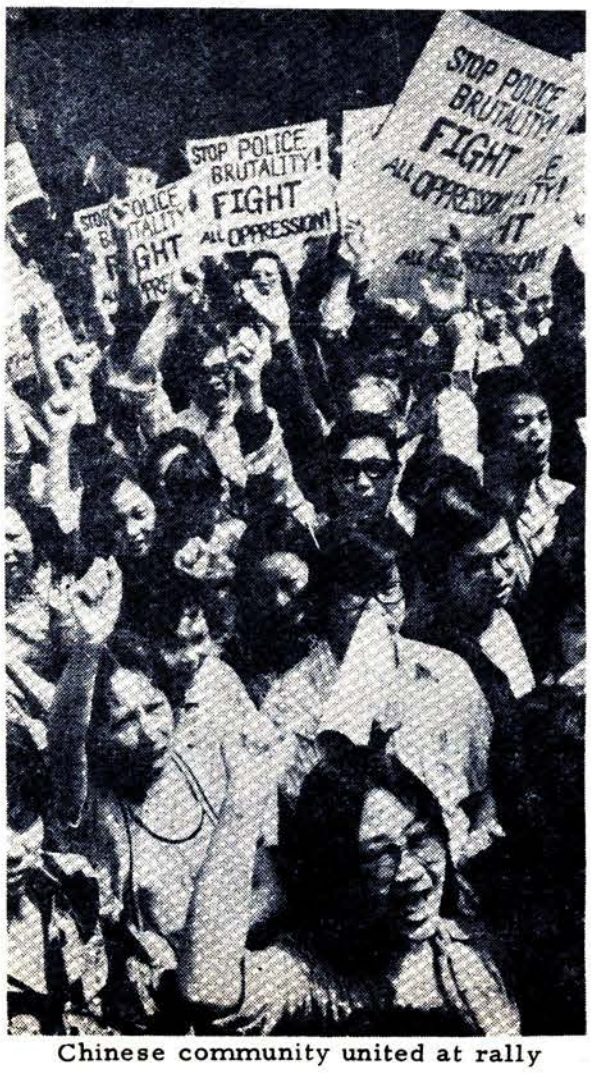
Not the VA. A study done by the General Accounting Office on the way the VA works in prisons, showed that it doesn't work at all--hardly a surprise to anyone who has tried to get any of the benefits administered by the VA. According to the VA, out of 280 prisons, 142 were being "serviced" by the VA. This service ranges from being "on call" (that means the individual vet must go through the prison red tape to get to the VA red tape which may result in a visit if the VA gets around to it and the prison officials allow it) to regular, scheduled visits and group counseling sessions (which happen in only a few prisons).

As part of the same study, a number of vets in prison were interviewed. 81% had been told nothing about VA benefits to which they were entitled. 53% thought they had lost their rights to benefits by being imprisoned. As a result of the stink caused when the results of the study were released, the VA promised to clean up their act, and set forth a minimum program for VA offices to follow. The results are demonstrated in a letter from a Pennsylvania prisoner: "I have written to the VA office in Pittsburgh several times and haven't received anything from them. I guess they don't want to answer. ...I realize now that I do need help! What I'd like to know is, is it too late? A prison cannot give the help because they don't care or have the time or want to help. I'm not lookin' for a cop out of prison, I know I can handle it but what about once I get out? I know for a fact I'll go right back to what I was doin' before I got busted. The people at Pittsburgh just don't give a damn about me or other brothers of the Vietnam war that seek help through the VA...."

So much for the new VA program in prisons. If there's one thing VVAW/WSO has learned through our war on the VA, it's that to get the rights and benefits promised to vets, we've got to fight for them. Vets in prison can't go in and jam the VA director; but they can demand their rights. In several prisons, vets have gotten together to work for decent benefits--for ALL vets, providing information to other vets about VA programs, and demanding that the VA respond to their needs. Work is going on around upgrading discharges, since a vet with a less-than-honorable discharge faces even greater problems.

Prisons in the US are based on repression and often open terror tactics; vets in prison face all the same conditions that other prisoners face and are not a separate group--anymore than vets on the outside are separate from other working people. But imprisoned vets are often there because of the particular experience they had in the military, and because they are veterans, they have particular ways in which they can unite--both around their problems as vets and their situation as prisoners. They need the support of people involved in the same fight on the other side of the prison walls. DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS!

# NY CHINATOWN HITS POLICE REPRESSION




Chinese community united at rally

Peter Yew, a young Chinese-American living in New York City's Chinatown, asked that police stop beating a 15 year-old kid whom they had stopped for a traffic violation. For his concern, Yew was savagely beaten right on the spot, taken back to the police station, stripped, beaten again and arrested on charges of resisting arrest and assault on a police officer.

His beating was the last straw as 15,000 Chinese took to the streets to fight back against police attacks and brutality against their community. Virtually every shop and factory in Chinatown was closed on May 19th for the demonstration and signs saying "Closed to Protest Police Brutality" were put in windows and on doors. The community united around demands for the dismissal of all charges against Yew; an end to discrimination of the Chinese community; and an end to discrimination in employment, housing, education, health, and all other social services for all minorities and working people.

Before this demonstration, the cops had inflamed the community even more by trying to pass the peoples' anger off as due to "an increase in crackdowns on gambling" -- totally evading the issue of police repression.

A week before the May 19th demo, several thousand people had marched on City Hall under an action sponsored by the Asian Americans for Equal Employment (AAFEE), raising demands similar to those raised at the May 19th action. The local business community and establishment refused to publicize or endorse the AAFEE action. But they were forced to act after the cops had incited the community with its gambling excuse. Then the local big shots started to move and tried to sieze leadership of the movement. These people, the Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), sometimes known as the Six Companies, are the ruling elite in Chinatown, being connected to the group of Chinese that fled to Taiwan at the time of the liberation of China.

It was the CCBA that called the May 19th action, bringing out old and young in one of the most united and militant actions ever taken by Chinatown residents. Although the CCBA tried to keep demands focused just on Peter Yew, the people of Chinatown clearly saw the broader issues, the fact that police repression is coming down in communities all across the US. This was shown by the slogans raised such as "Fight Police Brutality, Fight all Oppression!"

When the cops attacked the march, the people responded immediately and fought back. As the police tried to drag off one of the demonstrators, others in the march jumped the cops and fought them tooth and nail. When two of the people were arrested and taken to the police station, the crowd surrounded the station and secured the release of their friends.

The community even jammed the CCBA when they found out that it was trying to sell their demands short and had engaged in secret negotiations with the police. Two thousand people gathered at the CCBA office and demanded an accounting of this outright sellout, but the CCBA officials were too scared to show their faced.

The militancy and unity of the community won a victory by taking bold, firm action. The captain of the local police precinct was relieved of his command and transferred out of the area. Even though this does not change the continued repression and brutality, it shows that the local rulers are scared. They're scared of the rising anger of the masses of people and they know that nothing can stand up to a united people.

## Regional Offices

WASHINGTON/OREGON/ALASKA
VVAW/WSO
P.O. Box 411
Tillicum, Washington 98492
(206) 272-4532

CALIFORNIA/NEVADA/ARIZONA
VVAW/WSO
P.O. Box 24B65 - Village Station
Los Angeles, California 90024
(213) 629-3914

COLORADO/UTAH/NEW MEXICO/WYOMING
Bob Anyon
2530 W. 37th St. #2
Denver, Colorado 80211
(303) 320-4071

N. ILLINOIS/IOWA
VVAW/WSO
827 West Newport
Chicago, Illinois 60657
(312) 327-0488

S. ILLINOIS/E. MISSOURI/OKLAHOMA/ARKANSAS
VVAW/WSO
1023 Allen Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63104
(314) 621-2648

KANSAS/W. MISSOURI/NEBRASKA/NORTH & SOUTH DAKOTA
VVAW/WSO
1715 North St. Francis
Wichita, Kansas 67214
(316) 263-3946

MARYLAND/VIRGINIA/WASHINGTON, DC
MARYLAND/VIRGINIA/WASHINGTON, DC
VVAW/WSO
521B Second St., NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 543-0817

MASSACHUSETTS/NEW HAMPSHIRE/VERMONT/R.I./CONNECTICUT/MAINE
VVAW/WSO
15 Clymer
Burlington, Vermont 05401
(802) 862-8175

NEW YORK/N. NEW JERSEY
Jim Duffy, VVAW/WSO
41 Union Square West, Room 311
New York, New York 10003
(212) 255-7012

OHIO/INDIANA/KENTUCKY/MICHIGAN
W. PENNSYLVANIA/WEST VIRGINIA
VVAW/WSO
P.O. Box 19302
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219
(513) 961-6585

E. PENNSYLVANIA/DELAWARE/S. NEW JERSEY
VVAW/WSO
P.O. Box 638
Havertown, Pennsylvania 19083

TEXAS
VVAW/WSO
2912 Wentworth
Houston, Texas 77004
(713) 923-1589

WISCONSIN/MINNESOTA
VVAW/WSO
2532 N. Holton
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212
(414) 264-0882

**NATIONAL OFFICE**
VVAW/WSO
827 West Newport
Chicago, Illinois 60657
(312) 935-2129

## Regional Contacts

FLORIDA/GEORGIA
VVAW/WSO - David Gornewicz
30100 Old Dixie Hwy, Apt. #23
Homestead, Florida 33030
(305) 248-6799

## Project Offices

POST-VIETNAM SYNDROME CLEARING HOUSE
VVAW/WSO
2532 N. Holton
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212
(414) 264-0882

AMNESTY/PRISON PROJECT OFFICE
VVAW/WSO
827 West Newport
Chicago, Illinois 60657
(312) 935-2129

# MASS STRUGGLE FREES LAWTON

Chukia Lawton, Gary Lawton and defense committee member Rusty Bronaugh

A real peoples' victory was won on May 12th when Gary Lawton (VVAW/WSO member) was acquitted of murder charges stemming from the April, 1971 ambush slayings of two Riverside, California policemen. Lawton had been tried on these same charges in two previous trials but they ended with hung juries. Finally, after four years, two years in jail and three trials, Gary Lawton's freedom has been won!

This third trial began on March 6th in front of a six-man, six-woman jury and scores of Lawton supporters. The prosecution had no new evidence to introduce in this final trial, but again dragged out the same old trumped-up stories from cops, police informers and a variety of other characters. After deliberating for three days, the jury announced Lawton not guilty on their first vote. Jurors have since told the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee (RPPDC) that they knew Lawton was being framed before even half the evidence had been presented. When the "not guilty" verdict was read, cheers were heard from Lawton supporters who were in the courtroom, and the court clerk reading the verdict openly wept for joy. The clerk later told Lawton, "If it had gone any other way than the way it did, I don't know what I would have done."

The struggle to free Gary Lawton began four years ago, following his arrest for the ambush killings of the two cops. Eye-witnesses to the slayings reported they had seen three white youths and a teen-aged Black fleeing from the scene of the shooting. At that time, Lawton, a Black man, was 32 years-old and looked nothing like the witnesses' descriptions of those involved in the killing. But the small group of people who rule Riverside had to have someone to pay for the killings, and Gary Lawton became their target. The state chose to frame Lawton on the murder charges because they were having a hard time dealing with the fact that Gary was playing a leading role in organizing Riverside's poor and minority communities to fight discrimination, police repression, and bringing people into struggle against the Indochina war. Two other young Black men were arrested along with Gary in the hopes of bolstering the prosecution's case, but charges against them were dropped during the first two trials for a "lack of evidence."

As the frame-up against Lawton continued and intensified, the movement demanding his freedom also spread to communities around the country and reached as far as Europe and Japan. It is this movement that is responsible for Lawton's freedom -- not the so-called "justice" of the court system -- and the victory in Riverside is the result of the mass struggle that has been building to fight police and political repression. When the state first set out to frame Lawton, they had the intention of suppressing and intimidating the struggle that was growing in Riverside. But their efforts failed.

The RPPDC was formed in 1971 and began taking the struggle to free Lawton to the Riverside community. In 1972, VVAW/WSO took up the struggle of Gary on a national basis, and as the news of the repression coming down in Riverside spread around the country, the numbers of people who became involved in the movement to free Lawton grew -- a movement built through leafletting, petitions, forums, picket lines and demonstrations. As this struggle grew, repression mounted and in Riverside, over 50 Lawton supporters were arrested, fined, lost jobs, or were imprisoned because of work around Gary's case; yet, 70 supporters showed up for closing defense arguments in this third trial.

Repression breeds resistance and that resistance has been growing not only in Riverside, but in cities throughout the country. This is because the frame-up of Gary Lawton and the repression in Riverside is not some sort of isolated event, but is just one example of the increased nationwide attacks coming down on minority people in particular, and on all working people in general. The freeing of Gary Lawton is a real victory, and the repressive and racist campaign waged against him has been defeated by the struggle of a united people; but similar attacks and increased police brutality will continue to be used by the state in the hopes of intimidating people into submissiveness and a fear of fighting back.

But people all over the country are resisting these kinds of attacks in the only way possible -- by organizing to fight back against them. The masses of people of this country are refusing to be intimidated, because they can't afford to be. As the economy continues to crumble it will get harder and harder for families to keep their heads above water and make any kind of decent life. Rather than submit to the increased repression, and rather than sit back and allow the bosses to throw the burden of their crisis onto the backs of working and poor people, we're organizing and struggling against the attacks brought down by the ruling class -- on the job, in the unemployment offices, at the VA, and within our communities as the fight against police repression builds in cities from Atlanta, to Los Angeles, to New York, to Seattle. It is in the interests of working and poor people to fight these kinds of attacks, and fight we will!

The struggle to free Gary Lawton teaches us many important lessons about how we begin to throw off the boot of the ruling class from the backs of our necks. Gary Lawton wasn't freed by some sort of benevolent judge, nor was he freed because the "justice" system works(it works if you've got the money to pay it to "work"), and he wasn't freed because he had some fancy lawyer working for him. He was freed by the masses of people in this country who were demanding his freedom, who are building movements within their own communities to fight back against police repression. As a member of the RPPDC said after the victory in Riverside, "The state's attempts to hold back the peoples' struggle against repression did not and can not succeed. People are fighting back and winning!"